

Justification for Secrecy in Intelligence

Introductory Remarks

Aspen Conference

1. Strong pressures - in & out of government - for less secrecy in government. Extends especially to most secret government organizations - IC.
  - Public
    - o distrust because of past abuses
    - o desire to oversee IC operations
    - o secrecy and democracy are antithetical
  - Within Government
    - o IC conclusions not accepted at face value - proof required
  - Within IC
    - o IC working to restore public trust/confidence. Need public to understand - can't understand if everything withheld
- *Advantages to Openness - Contribute to public understanding of issues. - Studies e.g. Oil etc.*
2. Comment: real dilemma
  - want to be as open as possible
    - o recognize need for public understanding/support
  - same time, those who push for more openness must realize the costs: e.g. some Senators not persuaded Cubans in Shaba
    - o demand sources
    - o I must decide - if I reveal source, 2 political costs:
      1. lose source - either won't cooperate further, or - can't cooperate further (loses life)
      2. If source unique - often the case -
        - government must operate for indefinite future with less information.

So, while there should certainly be less secrecy than past -  
there remains need for some secrecy

3. Three explicit justifications:

First - Law requires sources and methods protected.

- But even if it did not, unless protected: *you lose them*
  - o technical systems compromised
    - \$ lost
    - capability lost
  - o human agents compromised
    - live's lost
    - investment of time & \$ lost
    - sometimes such unique access - irreplaceable for years, if at all
  - o Cooperation with allies lost
    - reduced confidence that we can protect information & relationships

Second : Advantage - 2 perspectives - 1. Advantage for us  
2. Giving Advantage to enemies

- In time of
  - o military parity
  - o economic interdependence
  - o political independence/activism societies
- Knowledge of world around us give advantage which we need if want to compete/lead
- Advantage to enemies - (ex. unbreakable codes -  
scientists want to xchg info - could give

Third : Survival enemies advantage.

- ~~Some things can only be done if done in Secret -~~
- ~~/ Most societies closed - if not entirely then to some degree~~  
~~These activities not necessarily bad.~~
- ~~- Yet, what they do, because world is small place today,~~  
~~can affect us all~~
  - e.g. Anti terrorism } - infiltrate orgs
  - Anti drug trafficking } - feed disinformation
  - Can't afford surprises } - assist other countries
- ~~- If information/decisions/planned actions not shared, they~~  
~~must be learned by other means~~
- ~~- Implies clandestine means, thus secrets.~~

4. Question then is not should there be secrets or should there not be, but how achieve an appropriate balance between secrecy and openness:

- Where is the line to be drawn between enough secrecy to ensure
  - o Keep sources - i.e. - channels of info open,
  - o Maintain the advantage knowledge gives , and
  - o *Carry out those activities which demand*  
~~Possess adequate fore knowledge to avert conflict~~  
~~or if can't be averted, to win~~  
*Secrecy for their success.*
- And, maximum disclosure to public to permit
  - o Meaningful participation in government
  - o Assurance that IC operating legally and properly
  - o And a rebuilding of confidence in IC.